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ABSTRACT

Intended as an introduction to the study of journalism in an English class, this booklet is divided into two sections, the first of which focuses on the purpose and importance of newspapers in a free thinking democratic society. In addition to considering the purpose of newspapers, the first section discusses responsibilities of journalists, a code of journalism standards, approaches to writing news, slanted reporting, objective reporting, elements of news stories, the "5 w's" and "how" in news stories, news leads, news story structure, feature stories, techniques of interviewing, a checklist for news stories, and a checklist for feature stories. The second section presents guidelines for community-focused student journalism projects. It is arranged into suggestions for selecting a topic, organizing a folder, using resources, conducting specific lessons, forming project groups, writing summary reports, doing layouts, discussing problems, and getting a story. The booklet concludes with a checklist for student reporters; a discussion of problems and pitfalls; ideas for extra credit, field trips and trip activities; and a bibliography. (HOD)

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CENTERING ON

THE STUDY OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS

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FOREWORD

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Director

1981

New York City Teacher Centers Consortium

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR...

Vera Winitch has been teaching in New York City public schools for more than fifteen years. She is presently a teacher of English at Newtown High School where she became the advisor for the school newspaper Tower. It was when working on the newspaper that she realized the need for students to be trained in journalism skills and has initiated introductory and advanced journalism courses in her school's curriculum.

She was awarded fellowships to study journalism with the New York City Writing Project and the Newspaper Fund. She has served as conference chairperson for the Language Arts Conference for New York City teachers sponsored by English Language Arts Committee and the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium, and was elected Queens delegate to the Board of Directors of Long Island School Press Association, a journalism committee that serves Queens, Nassau and Suffolk schools.

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INTRODUCTION

It is extremely exciting to a teacher when a classroom project can generate such interest in students that they become self-motivated. Such was my experience when I introduced the study of journalism to my English class. As a result of this unit the students:

- became more observant of people, places, issues and events;
- learned about and applied critical reading and creative writing to their learning experiences;
- began to question, probe and ultimately learn more about their world;
- became skillful in dealing with people by learning how to elicit information from others;
- learned how to appreciate their communities and developed community spirit as they became more aware of their communities assets, activities, and services; and
- became aware of all the elements necessary to put a newspaper together.

I am eager to share with you what I did, how I did it, what was successful and what pitfalls I encountered.

This publication, Centering On the Study of Newspaper Journalism in the High Schools, reflects the development of the unit. The first part is primarily concerned with the introduction, purpose and importance newspapers serve in the lives of people who live in a free - thinking democratic society. Students learn and develop the essential background, understanding and skills necessary for newspaper journalism both as readers and writers, such as:

- objectivity
- accuracy
- fairness
- critical thinking
- skillful, creative writing
- keen observations

In the second part of the unit, the students serve as reporters in the community and use the skills they learned and developed in actual experiences and situations outside the classroom. The approach and organization within the classroom becomes individualized as students select their own area of interest to pursue. This is an exciting and interesting time as students begin to investigate, research and write their story for a journalism class newspaper project. Students keep a log of their leads and their activities, and a folder which contains their tapes, photographs, notes, stories, and revisions.

Students share their experiences with each other as they offer suggestions and constructive criticism. This is the part of the unit that is so motivating to the student-reporters. Their enthusiasm becomes contagious and even those students who are timid and unsure become caught up in the spirit of journalists who seek interesting, accurate, and unusual stories.

The requirements for the project are quite specific and are included in this booklet. Along with practices and procedures which proved successful in this unit, suggestions for additional enrichment activities and problems students encountered are included.

Depending upon the structure in your school, this journalism curriculum can be taught as a separate unit or a unit within the traditional curriculum at some point during the semester. Time as well as your students' abilities will determine just how much of the curriculum you do cover within your particular classroom situation.

PURPOSE OF NEWSPAPERS

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE PURPOSE OF NEWSPAPERS

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Write on chalk board:

Why do people read newspapers?

Ask Class:

1. *What are some reasons why people read newspapers?*

   Write the four categories listed below:

   - To inform
   - To analyze, persuade, interpret
   - To entertain
   - To serve as a market place

2. *What are the parts or sections of the newspaper which fulfill these purposes?*

   Next to the four categories, list the parts/sections elicited from the class. Some parts will overlap. Any section mentioned should fall within the four purposes. Students should have newspapers with them to help identify sections.

Example:

To inform-news, reports, stock market, weather, obituary

To analyze, persuade, interpret-editorial, viewpoints, critical reviews on books, plays, movies

To entertain-puzzles, cartoons, horoscope, human interest stories, sports

To serve as a market place-jobs, real estate, merchandise, cars, sales

ENRICHMENT

Students cut out parts/sections of their newspaper and place them under the four categories discussed in class.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF JOURNALISTS

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CREDIBLE JOURNALISTS

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Define and state what place these concepts have in journalism.

libel

ethics

bias

subjectivity

objectivity

ethics

Ask Class:

- *What is credibility?*
- *How does a business or organization develop credibility?*
- *How does a newspaper develop credibility?*

Discuss with students which newspapers have credibility and which newspapers do not. Here are some key words to help direct the discussion: accuracy, balance, editorializing, and yellow journalism.

ENRICHMENT

If you were to write a code of ethics or standards for a school or community newspaper, what would you include?

CODE OF JOURNALISM STANDARDS

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL COMPARE THEIR CODE OF JOURNALISM STANDARDS WITH THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Define and discuss these vocabulary words;

allegation candidly erred rebuttal integrity

Ask Class:

Why would a newspaper set professional standards for itself?

Are the standards the same for all papers?

Give examples from your own experience.

Write on Board:

List some students' code of standards.

Distribute:

Copies of the Chicago Sun-Times' Code of Professional Standards (on following pages).

Compare:

Students' code with the Chicago Sun-Times

Ask Class:

What standards of the Chicago Sun-Times impress you? Why?

Which, if any, do you consider too harsh or demanding?

What standards would you add to this code?

How will you revise your code based on our discussion?

ENRICHMENT

Bring in examples of newspapers that do not conform to standards of journalism that were discussed today. In a paragraph, explain why/how they do not conform.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The following Code of Professional Standards has been adopted by the Sun-Times as a statement of principle for itself, its employees and as a benchmark by which its readers can judge its performance.

The integrity of the Chicago Sun-Times rests upon its reputation for fairness and accuracy. That integrity is based on keeping our news columns free of bias or opinion. To be professional is to be accurate and fair.

The following guidelines have been prepared for the guidance of the staff and information of the public as to the policies that underline our professional standards. No guidelines can meet every situation. And no guidelines or set of rules can substitute or replace a reputation for integrity built on day-to-day decisions by an editorial staff dedicated to finding the truth and publishing it without fear or favor.

Accuracy

Accuracy in reporting the news is the mark of a professional. It is a standard of excellence toward which we will always strive.

1. Every effort will be made to avoid errors or inaccuracies. There is no excuse for failure to check a fact or allegation.
2. Newspaper headlines and pictures should accurately reflect the stories they accompany or represent.
3. Mistakes should be corrected promptly and candidly. It is impossible to avoid all error; it is easy to correct errors. In making the correction, we should not be afraid to admit we have erred.

Fair Play

We should at all times show respect for the rights of those encountered in the course of gathering and presenting news. In this respect:

1. Any person or organization whose reputation is attacked is entitled to simultaneous rebuttal.
2. Every effort should be made to present all sides of controversial issues.

3. The anonymous quote, especially in stories involving controversial issues, is to be avoided except in those cases when the reason for concealing the identity of a source are manifestly clear to the reader.
4. The newspaper commits itself to protect and defend the identity of confidential news sources providing us with information considered valid for publication.
5. Articles of opinion and analysis shall be properly identified as such and kept distinctive from news coverage.

Ethics

Our management and staff must remain free of obligation to any special interest and be committed only to the public's right to know.

1. Secondary employment, political involvement, holding public office, and service in community organizations should be avoided if they contain the possibility of conflict of interest or of compromising the integrity of the newspaper. Acceptance of gifts or service of value is also to be avoided.
2. As a general principle we will continue to pay for all travel. If an exception is required, a decision will be made on the merits of each case, with the understanding that conditions of any free travel are to be fully explained in connection with the subsequent news coverage.

Public Access

We recognize and respect the right of the public to comment on public issues or materials appearing in our pages. It will be our policy to provide a regular department for such commentary or correction, subject only to limitations of relevancy and space.

We want a dialog with our readers, for it is their newspaper as well as ours. It shall be the policy of our editors and their staffs to encourage the maximum amount of public participation in bringing all points of view before our readers.

Finally, we recognize that integrity is our greatest asset. To maintain that integrity, we pledge our best efforts and full resources to keep faith with those to whom we owe ultimate responsibility-our readers.

APPROACHES TO WRITING NEWS STORIES

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL REALIZE THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO WRITING A STORY BY COMPARING TWO NEWS STORIES WRITTEN IN TWO DIFFERENT CENTURIES (SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE WRITING)

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Look up the meaning of these words; fiendishness, barbarity, expeditions, restoratives , conveys

Read, Compare and Discuss:

Two different newspaper articles from two different centuries covering alleged murders.

1. This story was printed in the Fort Smith (Arkansas) Weekly Herald for August 3, 1867.

A HIDEOUS ATROCITY IN TENNESSEE
TWO GIRLS MURDER THEIR STEP-MOTHER

On Saturday last a shocking and most brutal murder was committed in Paint Rock settlement, which for brutality and fiendishness, surpassess anything of the kind that we have ever been called upon to chronicle.

It appears that a Mrs. Hicks and her two step-daughters, named respectively Mary and Kaziah, had for some time lived unpleasantly together, when the two daughters determined to put her out of the way. Accordingly, with the monstrous intent, they forcibly conveyed their unfortunate victim to the smokehouse nearby, and commenced a series of tortures that even the veriest savage would have shrunk back from and grown hideous at-such was the enormity of their barbarity and wickedness. They first attempted to strangle their victim to death; but failing in that, these fiends in human shape bethought themselves of a more refined, as well as expeditious mode of accomplishing their object, which was to pour melted lead in the ear of their helpless victim, and then to make assurance doubly sure, these devoted daughters struck the prostate and dying woman several blows on the head with an axe.

APPROACHES TO WRITING NEWS STORIES (continued)

Supposing the old lady dead or dying-having finished the "job" these Christian daughters left their mother weltering in her blood and went to church. Some of the neighbors soon after coming in found Mrs. Hicks in the condition the daughters left her, administered restoratives and revived her sufficiently to relate the above detailed facts.

We learn that Mrs. Hicks has since died of her injuries, and that the murderers are still at large, having secreted themselves so as to prevent the officers of the law from arresting them.

II. This story was printed in The New York Times for February 1972

Youth Dies Resisting Holdup in Subway

A 14 year old youth was stabbed yesterday evening as he and four friends resisted an attempted robbery by five other youths at a platform on the Chamber Street IRT subway station, the police reported.

The police said the youth, identified as Michael Paulk, of 44 Second Avenue, had been walking through the station at about 6 p.m. with two male and two female friends when a group of five male youths stopped them and demanded money.

When the first group refused, the police said, one of the assailants grabbed a paper bag from one of the youths he was confronting. The first group started to flee, the police said, and one of them turned and saw that the young Paulk boy had been stabbed. He was taken to Beekman Downtown Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

ENRICHMENT

1. Write the similarities between these two stories.
2. Explain the differences between the stories. Be spec'fic and point out words and phrases which show these differences.
3. How does each story fit within the criteria for good newspaper reporting and writing? Explain your answer.
4. According to today's standards, which would be libelous? Why?

SLANTED REPORTING

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL RECOGNIZE SLANTED/SUBJECTIVE REPORTING

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Define and discuss these vocabulary words;

denotation fact subjective connotation opinion

Identify:

The sentences that are objective and subjective.

1. Miss Jackson deserves to be Festival Queen. _____
2. Injured in the crash was 22 year old Don Anderson, who was driving the unsafe jalopy. _____
3. No one was injured in the blast which damaged the main building of the factory. _____

Discuss:

- Connotation of words "deserves" in sentences 1 and "jalopy" in sentence 2.
- Substandard journalism. It is important to recognize subjective reporting or editorializing.
- What is the difference in suggested meaning of each headline in the following pairs.

  Only five hundred attend meeting.
  Five hundred people throng to meeting.

  Merely 25% failed to vote.
  Nearly 25% failed to vote.

ENRICHMENT

- Each of the following statements is a slanted report of same event.

  Rewrite each so that merely the cold facts are given.

  1. The senator had timidly refused to support the resolution.
  2. Our gallant team fought bravely against odds but lost the game.
  3. The poor speaker made so pitiful a sight that the audience listened out of kindness.
  4. Councilman Ives courageously took a positive stand on the road problem, voting for the new highway.

- Point out examples of slanted reporting in the school newspaper.

OBJECTIVE REPORTING

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBJECTIVE REPORTING AND SLANTED REPORTING

PROCEDURE

Read to Class:

News stories should be objective. Yet often the choice of words that are used in a story tends to color the story and give a slanted view. Below are two versions of the same story. Read both of them; then answer the questions below.

1. Gayle Robinson, seventeen year old daughter of Samuel L. Robinson, disappeared from her home five days ago. Miss Robinson left no note, but she did take a suitcase and some clothing. According to her distraught parents, the girl had about twenty dollars when she left. Last night Mr. Robinson asked the police for assistance in finding his daughter. Mr. Robinson is a candidate for the City Council. He is scheduled to speak tonight at a Teen-agers in Politics meeting and expects to be there, indicating that while there was little he could do at the moment for his daughter, there might be much he could do to inform other young adults of their political rights and responsibilities.

2. Last night several detectives talked to Samuel L. Robinson, a candidate for the City Council, about the sudden and strange disappearence of his seventeen year old daughter Gayle, who dropped out of sight five days ago. In her closet are dozens of skirts and designer jeans. The girl's bank account was untouched; as was the "piggy bank," actually a Raggedy Ann, in which she has collected pennies and nickels since she was a little girl.

   Today the Robinson home is a restless, unhappy place. A friend of the missing girl whispered something about a quarrel between Gayle and her father. Gayle's twelve year old brother Charles is lonely, and Mrs. Robinson's eyes are red from crying. Mr. Robinson is scheduled to speak tonight at a political rally. When asked if he would keep the engagement, Mr. Robinson said emotionlessly: "of course I'll keep it."

   1. What is the difference between the leads in these stories?
   2. How do the choice of words differ in the two stories?
   3. What facts are emphasized in each story?
   4. What is the underlying purpose apparent in each version?

ELEMENTS OF NEWS STORIES

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO ANALYZE AND LIST ELEMENTS OF NEWS STORIES

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

List stories that have appeared in the newspaper in the past week.

List on Board:

Elements of news stories that are elicited from students.

a. immediacy or timeliness - spot news, newest or most recent angle, stories that concern events that happened in the past written with a current angle of the previous event

b. important people - political leaders, entertainment figures

c. unusualness -events, people

d. disaster - floods, earthquakes

e. prominent places - Albany, Washington D.C., Moscow

f. proximity or nearness - geographic nearness interest readers because the news event happens close to them geographically

g. conflict - war, crime, violence, elections, debates, sports stories, news from governmental agencies, courts

h. drama-suspense, mystery, comedy, the more pictures and dramatic, the more appealing to its readers

i. progress - significant changes for betterment of humanity; in science, government, medicine, car safety

j. sex-stories about romance, marriage, divorce, women's rights, non-traditional jobs that are being filled by males and females

Discuss:

Take one story which every student has a copy of, or use the opaque projector and go over that one story with the class listing & discussing each category of newsworthiness and how and which apply to the story.

ENRICHMENT

- Give out copies of the school newspaper and have students determine which category or categories of newsworthiness each story fits into. Specific reasons for each choice must be given. (It is important to note that a news story should fit into several categories to be newsworthy).

- Evaluate the news stories of a daily newspaper and see how many elements of news each story contains.

THE 5 W's AND HOW IN NEWS STORIES

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE STRUCTURE OF A STRAIGHT STORY BY FINDING THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW IN SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES.

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Read the top story on the front page of The New York Times (top right corner) and underline the who, what, when, where, why and how in the story.

Ask Class:

1. *How does the pace of life differ today from a century ago?*
   (It is more active with more people working, etc.)
2. *Newspapers reflect this change of pace. How does this story which appeared in The New York Times on April 17, 1865 compare with news stories written today?*
   (Either hand out copies of the following or read it orally to the class).

NEW YORK TIMES: April 17, 1865

WAR DEPARTMENT-WASHINGTON
April 15, 4:10 a.m.

The President continues insensible and is sinking.
Secretary Seward remains without change.

FREDERICK SEWARD'S skull is fractured in two places, besides a severe cut upon the head. The attendant is still alive, but helpless. MAJ. EDWARD's wound is not dangerous.

THE 5 W's AND HOW IN NEWS STORIES (continued)

It is now ascertained with reasonable certainty that two assassins were engaged in the horrible crime, WILKES BOOTH being the one that shot the President, and the other, a companion of his, whose name is not known, but whose description is so clear that he can hardly escape. It appears from a letter found in BOOTH's trunk that the murder was planned before the 4th of March, but fell through then because the accomplice backed out until "Richmond could be heard from." BOOTH and his accomplice were at the livery stable at 6 o'clock, last evening, and left there with their horses about 10 O'clock, or shortly before that hour. It would seem that they had for several days been seeking their chance, but for some reason it was not carried into effect until last night.

One of them has evidently made his way to Baltimore--the other has not yet been traced.

- -

WAR DEPARTMENT-WASHINGTON
April 15.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN died this morning at twenty-two minutes after seven o'clock.

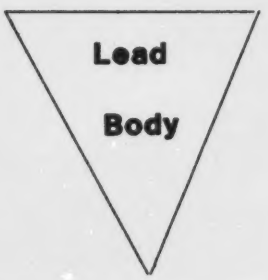
3. *Students will realize that the above story was written in the order in which things happened - chronological order. News stories today are written in a different order-first a summary is given and then the details in descending order of importance. Where are the 5 W's and How answered in this story?*
4. *If their story about the assassination were written today, how would it begin? Write the first two sentences.*
5. *Compare this story with the top story in the Times. Where are most of the 5 W's and How answered in the story? Today's newspapers reflect the change of pace in our lives compared to a century ago. What are the advantages of the structure of current news stories?*

THE 5 W's AND HOW IN NEWS STORIES (continued)

(Readers have a summary at the very beginning; they do not have to continue reading if they do not want to know the details.)

6. *What are the disadvantages of the structure of current news stories?*
   (There is little or no surprise or drama in the news story. The story is not given in order in which it happened.)

7. News stories have geometric structure called the inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid has a lead which is the first paragraph. Many of the 5 W's and How are answered in this paragraph lead. The rest of the story is called the body and contains the details. It is written in descending order of importance. Each paragraph usually elaborates on another detail.



8. *Which paragraph would be least important to the story? Why?*
9. *If there is not enough space for the entire story, the bottom paragraph is cut. How will this affect the story?*
10. *How many paragraphs can be cut and still give the reader the important information?*

THE 5 W's AND HOW IN NEWS STORIES (continued)

(Working from bottom up, each paragraph could be cut up to the lead. If the story is well written, the lead, which answers most of the 5 W's and How, can stand alone. This would make for short, choppy stories. However, it is important for students to realize that well written news stories can pass the cut-off test.) It is the readers who decide how much they want to know.

ENRICHMENT

- Read two news articles in The New York Times

  1) Outline each:
     - according to the lead - who
       what
       when
       where
       why
       how
     - main idea in each paragraph
  2) Determine if and how story conforms to the cut-off text.
  3) Which paragraph in each story can stand alone and still convey the essential information to the reader?

- Clip an example of a news story written in inverted order and another, about the same length, of a story written in chronological order. Give reasons why you do or do not think the style is appropriate for each story.

- Find a news story in your school newspaper which does not meet the "cut-off test." Rewrite the story in an inverted pyramid style.

NEWS LEADS

OBJECTIVE

THE STUDENT WILL ANALYZE NEWS LEADS AND WRITE LEADS WHICH "FEATURE THE FEATURE"

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Read three leads in today's New York Times. Outline the order of the information in the leads according to the 5 W's and How. Put the response on the board and discuss.

Ask Class:

1. *What conclusions can we draw about news leads from these examples?*

   Students should recognize that news leads do not all begin with the same W's or How. The most important aspect or feature of the story determines the order of the 5 W's and How. The beginning of the lead is sometimes called the "show window" because it draws the reader into the story. It is important to begin with that feature (who, what, when, where, why or how) which is most important to the story. This is called "feature the feature".

Write:

- A news lead based on the following information:

  At 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, May 23rd, the Future Engineers Club held a meeting in Room 124. It was the last time the club met this year. Mister John Anderson came over to talk to the members. He is the architect who has drawn plans for lots of prominent buildings in town, including this high school.

- An evaluation of students' leads and decide which was the most interesting, informative and concise. Which feature was featured?

NEWS LEADS (continued)

ENRICHMENT

1. Using the information below, write a lead that begins with What.

   When Anthony Rizzo, building custodian, opened principal Hamilton Lowe's office in high school yesterday morning, he found papers scattered over the floor and desk drawers opened. Mr. Lowe, upon investigation, reported that $210 in cash from ticket sales to the senior play was missing from his desk. Nothing else seemed missing. Glass in an office window was broken, and Mr. Lowe said the burglar must have entered through the window.

2. Using the information, write a lead that begins with Why.
   - A variety show will be held in your school auditorium.
   - The show will begin at 8 p.m., Thursday of next week.
   - Sponsor of the show is the Boosters' Club, an organization of the parents of students in your high school.
   - Three comedy routines will be presented by teams of parents.
   - Fifteen members of the high school band will present several members.
   - Admission will be $1.00 per person.
   - All profits will go into this year's student loan and scholarship fund.

3. Using the school newspaper, evaluate the news leads. Rewrite those leads that did not "feature the feature", the most important and/or interesting of the S W's and How. Usually the When and Where are the least important in school publications.

NEWS STORY STRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE

STUDENTS WILL ANALYZE THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEWS STORY

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Read the news story below and outline the information, paragraph by paragraph.

Three Newtown High School students were injured today in a one car accident on icy Corona Avenue and Junction Boulevard.

John Carroll and his sister Judy, both juniors at Newtown, were reported in serious but not critical condition at Elmhurst General Hospital as a result of injuries received when their car skidded into a telephone pole. A third occupant of the vehicle, sophomore Charles Barclay, was released from the hospital following treatment for a sprained wrist and superficial cuts.

The accident occurred about 7:30 a.m., at the intersection of Corona Avenue and Junction Boulevard as the students were driving to school.

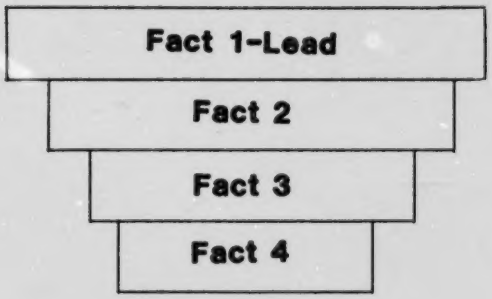
Investigating officers said that John, who was driving, apparently lost control on a snow-covered patch of ice as he turned on to Corona Avenue. The car skidded, jumped the sidewalk curb and struck the telephone pole.

No citations were issued.

NEWS STORY STRUCTURE (continued)

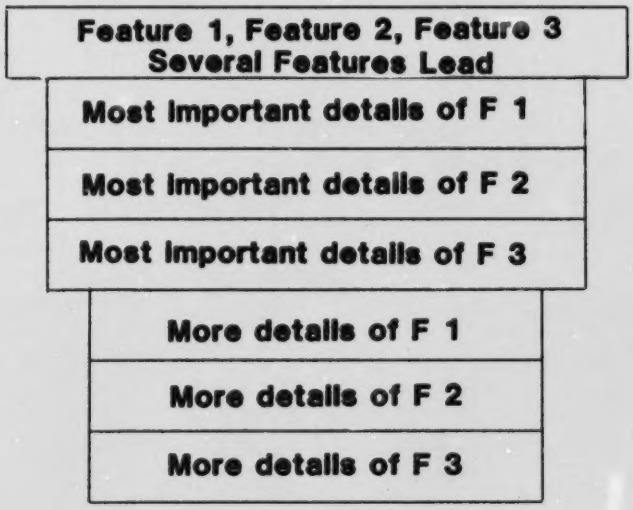
Discuss:

1. Student responses from Do Now. Below is an example of a single feature news story structure



In the structure, there is a descending order of importance. Only one fact is developed in each paragraph.

2. Stories that encompass several features. Below is an example of several feature news story structure


Feature 1, Feature 2, Feature 3
Several Features Lead
Most important details of F 1
Most important details of F 2
Most important details of F 3
More details of F 1
More details of F 2
More details of F 3

NEWS STORY STRUCTURE (continued)

Example:

[Increased class time for freshmen,]$^{1.}$ [a new system for underachieving sophomores,]$^{2.}$ and [abolition of the morning homework period]$^{3.}$ are recommendations made by the Curriculum Council for next year.

Outline:

A news story together in The New York Times using the several features story structure outline. It is this way that students see how a story goes from most important to least important. Also, they begin to see the organization of the story which really begins with the lead.

ENRICHMENT

- Outline a news story from The New York Times using the several features news story structure.
- Below are a reporter's notes. You are to read these notes and write a news story of about 270 words. You will not need to use all the information. Be sure to follow the inverted pyramid for your story structure. Develop only one fact in each paragraph.

— There is a large European-American bank in Forest Hills, New York
— Manager is Brian Watkins, 53
— Angela E. Greene is First Vice President of the bank
— Bank Vault can only be opened by Watkins and Greene together at exactly 8:58 A.M.

NEWS STORY STRUCTURE (continued)

— Bank guard Frederick T. Unger, 37
— Unger has been guard here for five years
— Guard carries gun--has never used it
— 10 A.M. today - bank entered by three armed men wearing ski-mask
— Customers in bank at one time: Grace Jones 24, Michael Petrie 17, James Jeffers 72
— Gunmen ordered everyone to lie down on floor near vault. Tellers Yvonne James 25, Jack Fitch 29, were in bank
— Gunmen used green 1972 Pontiac sedan
— Unger behind counter tying shoelace when gunmen entered. "I stayed where I was and just kept pushing that alarm button." Unger
— Button is silent alarm--summons New York City Police.
— Police apprehended gunmen as they left the bank.
— Unger - "I don't know whether I could have shot the robbers. I never fired at anything except a target before."
— Unger married, two children, boy 7, girl 9
— Robbers had taken $71,000 from vault
— John Bright, Alan Glitch, Heney Hess, ages 32, 21, 19 are suspected of two similar bank robberies in New York City this year
— Capt. J.T. Brose, New York City Police: "Several other crimes these men may have perpetrated are under investigation right now."

- Clip two news stories from a daily newspaper and underline all the transitional words. Draw arrows from the words in one sentence to the linking words in the next. If there are no transitional words, explain how continuity is made.

- Study one news story from the high school newspaper and suggest a better order for details. Rearrange the news story so that the facts are in proper order.

FEATURE STORIES

OBJECTIVE

THE STUDENTS WILL EXAMINE AND RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A NEWS STORY AND A FEATURE STORY BY EXAMINING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES OF FEATURE STORIES.

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

What kind of stories do you like to read in newspapers? Why?

Ask Class:

1. *List the kinds of stories you like to read in newspapers.*

   Answers will vary but most of these stories will fall into "soft" news-feature stories.

2. *How do these stories differ from the news stories we've been reading and writing up to now?*

   Responses will vary but should include: (list on board)

Characteristics of Feature Stories

1. Primary purpose is to entertain, usually read in leisure moments.
2. More emphasis on human interest.
3. Use of more vivid words to create images and stimulate the 5 senses.
4. Use of more quotes.
5. More freedom in form and structure. Feature stories rarely have a news summary lead.
6. Can usually be written in any style that is appropriate to content and purpose of story.
7. Does not have to pass the cut-off test. The article is rounded out by linking up the conclusion with the beginning.

Types of Feature Leads

1. Biographical sketches of people
2. Historical places and events
3. Unusual events
4. News feature - focus in on a human interest angle of a news event.

Provide:

Examples of feature stories for students to read and discuss in class.

ENRICHMENT

1. List some of the characteristics of a feature story found in the article below:

   New York Times 12/4/80

   Icy Gusts Buffet City, Ending Mild Spell

   A Cold wind howled in from the northeast yesterday, rattling skyscraper windows and knocking down power lines feeding electricity to several thousand homes in New York City's northern suburbs.

   Clouds of smoke were blown across lower Manhattan from the building site at Battery Park City. In Times Square, gusts up to 60 miles an hour-just 14 miles below hurricane force-sent an office window crashing down into two packed cars. The cars were damaged slightly, but no one was hurt.

2. Find examples of different types of feature stories.

3. Find examples of these novelty leads in feature stories: contrast, shocker, question, quotation, one-word, descriptive, narrative.

4. Suggest three topics that would make interesting feature stories for the school newspaper.

TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

OBJECTIVE

THE STUDENT WILL ESTABLISH TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

PROCEDURE

Do Now:

Read the following account of an interview:

One day a student reporter went into the office of the director of a state wide organization of high school papers. The conversation which took place was somewhat of this order.

Reporter: I'd like to get a story about the conference.

Director : What conference?

Reporter: Don't you know? I'm not sure. You're Sponsor of some sort of conference? Miss Whinton, the advisor of our paper said you would know.

Director : Oh, I suppose you mean the high school press conference. What would you like to know about it?

Reporter: Oh, ah...everything!

Director : Everything: My, that would take too long to tell. Besides, there was a long story about our conference in the last issue. We haven't done anything in particular. Would you like to ask me about the conference? I would be glad to tell you about it, but otherwise I'm afraid I can't help you.

Reporter: Well, I guess Miss Whinton just thought maybe something happened and it hasn't. I guess I've done the best I can to get a story. Haven't I? Well, thank you and good-by.

TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING (continued)

Ask the Class:

1. *How would you evaluate that interview?*
2. *Why is a good interview so important to a reporter?*
3. *How could the above interview have been improved?*
4. *How do you establish rapport between you and the interviewee?*
5. *Let's begin to write some responses on the board.*

Techniques of Interviewing

1. Introduce yourself and state your purpose.
2. Be friendly and courteous. Make interviewee feel that what he/she has to say is important. Try to convey the impression that you are personally interested. Smile and nod a lot. Keep looking at interviewee.
3. Be a good listener. Avoid unnecessarily interrupting the interviewee.
4. Ask questions that will enable the interviewee to do most of the talking. Ask leading questions. Avoid yes or no questions unless absolutely necessary. Prepare questions ahead of time.
5. Keep the interview going smoothly. Do not permit the interviewee to wander from the topic. Jump in and ask another question when the interviewee pauses, if he begins to wander from the topic.
6. Begin with "agreeable" questions. Do not ask controversial questions until rapport has been established.
7. Observe facial expressions, mannerisims and gestures. Sometimes they will indicate that your interviewee does not want to discuss, a subject, or is getting restless. Sometimes they will help to convey the person's feeling. Note dress of interviewee.
8. Take plenty of notes, but do not bury your face in them.
9. Ask to verify notes before you leave. If you are unsure of something, ask a question. If you are unsure of spelling, ask interviewee to spell out titles, names, etc.
10. Before you end the interview, ask, an openended question, "Is there anything I should know about this?"
11. Thank the person for the interview.

TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING (continued)

ENRICHMENT

1. You are assigned to interview a member of the faculty who has just returned from a trip to Poland where she visited her family. She is also a very involved member of the community.
   - Prepare 10 interview questions for your interview with her.
   - List what you would have to research to prepare for your interview.
2. Observe your family and friends as a source for a news story. When you decide who it is who would make a good news story (remember the elements of news), prepare list of interview questions. Conduct them using your notes. Write a news story.
3. Find a story in the newspaper that was obtained from an interview. From the information and questions in the story, list the questions the reporter probably asked during the interview.
4. Have students role-play. One member of the class should take the role of an important person in whom the class is interested. This student will read biographical information about the important person and then will come before the class to be interviewed. After the "press conference", write a news story based on the interview.

CHECKLIST FOR NEWS STORIES

Students can provide support for each other by reading each other's stories, going over the checklist and offering suggestions.

- ☐ Does the story begin with a news story lead? _____
  - If not, how? _____
  - Is it brief (30-40 words)? _____
- ☐ Does the body of the story go from most to least important? _____
- ☐ Does each paragraph develop a detail? _____
  - If not, where? _____
- ☐ Are paragraphs no longer than 60 words? _____
- ☐ Does the story pass the cut-off test? _____
  - If not, why? _____
- ☐ Is the story written objectively? _____
  - If not, indicate where _____
- ☐ Is the use of the personal pronoun eliminated? _____
  - If not, where? _____
- ☐ Is the writing concise, omitting all padding (extra words)? _____
- ☐ Is the spelling and punctuation correct? _____
  - If not, where? _____
- ☐ What suggestions can you offer to improve the writing of this news story? _____

_____

_____

_____

CHECKLIST FOR FEATURE STORIES

☐ Does the feature story begin with an interest-arousing lead?

_____

If not, which lead should be used? (contrast, shocker, question, quotation, one-word, descriptive, narrative)

_____

☐ Does the reporter make the purpose clear early in the story?

If not where? _____

☐ Does the story have a lead, a body and a conclusion?

If not, what parts are missing? _____

☐ Does the body add to the total facts and help carry the idea along logically? _____

If not, why? _____

☐ Does the conclusion tie up all the loose ends, giving finality to the article? _____

If not, indicate how this can be done? _____

☐ Does the reporter use vivid words which add color and life to the story? _____

If not, how and where can these be included? _____

☐ Does the reporter use fresh, original figures of speech?

If not, how and where can these be used? _____

☐ Is the spelling and punctuation correct? _____

If not, where? _____

☐ What suggestions can you offer to improve the writing of this feature story? _____

_____

STUDENT'S PROJECT FOR THE JOURNALISM CLASS NEWSPAPER

SELECT A TOPIC

Student-reporters select their own topic or area of interest to research, explore and write about for the class newspaper.

So that students do not compete with the student-reporter who cover beats for the school newspaper, and so that students get out into their communities to investigate, learn and appreciate their neighborhoods, they must select some area outside of school and within the community.

Have students bring into class any local, community newspapers that are sold on the news stands or published by private community groups such as civics associations. Students should pursue these for ideas for topics to explore for the project. Also, have students keep an eye out for any posters and flyers which announce meetings or activities in the community. The parents' association might also offer additional suggestions. It would be a good idea for you to double check these in case the students overlooked any interesting leads.

Once this is done, the class is ready to brainstorm for ideas. These can be listed on the board. You or a student can have these put on a ditto sheet and run off. Have each student look over the list as a homework assignment and return to class ready to indicate two or three areas he would be interested in. It is not a good idea to have him indicate only one area because some adjustments may have to be made.

Below is a list of areas a brainstorming session might produce.
For obvious reasons, I have made them somewhat general.
You and your students would have more specifics for your area.

Suggestions for Topics to Pursue

1. Block associations (there may be several in the area)
2. Proposal to expand or close a hospital in the area
3. Special programs in the local public libraries
4. Civic Associations - meetings, special activities
5. Proposal to rezone local area
6. Local school boards - elections, meetings, special plans
7. Civilian auxiliary patrols
8. Crime - against residents, merchants, senior citizens
9. Local boy scouts and girl scouts units in the community-special projects or programs
10. Local landmarks in the community - churches, temples, parks, buildings
11. Senior citizens who lived in community for many years and can give some past history, personal reflections, etc.
12. Alumni who serve in governmental positions-elected or appointed-on local, national or state level.
13. Local community sports teams
14. Family court in the area
15. Traffic court in the area
16. Opening of new store or restaurant
17. Construction of new housing or demolishment of some part of community
18. Local political clubs
19. Local recycling center
20. Veterans organizations
21. Special places of interest in the area: museums, theatres, flea markets, gymnasiums, stadiums, discos
22. Areas of special interest: fashion, dance
23. Agency or organization involved in consumer protection
24. Local community planning board

WRITE TOPIC

Once students choose their topic, they submit it to you in writing.

Name: _____ English Class _____ Official Class _____

Date: _____

Topic: I intend to research and write about _____

_____ for the class journalism newspaper.

_____

(Signature)

Thus they have made a commitment to themselves, the class and their newspaper. Should they change their topic for whatever reason, they must indicate that in writing. (RELAX - there will be changes. However, this written commitment makes for a more formal sense of responsibility in a student's mind).

You then distribute a press card to each student-reporter. This is a good time to review responsibilities and obligations of journalism. Below is a sample of the press card I distribute to my students. This can be run-off by a school aide on mimeo machine from the master.

Front of card

STUDENT REPORTER IDENTIFICATION

* * PRESS CARD * *

Name

is on assignment for Newtown High School, Elmhurst N.Y. and is authorized to collect information and photographs for his/her journalism class. Your courtesy is appreciated.

Expires / /

Authorized Signature

Back of card

Newtown High School
48-01 90th Street
Elmhurst, New York 11373

Ms. Winitch - Teacher

(212) 592-4300

ORGANIZE FOLDER

Students have their own folder which contains all their work for this project. This is checked frequently by you at which time you indicate this on the outside of the folder with the date and any questions, suggestions or comments such as "see me for a conference" or perhaps the name of a classmate who can share some expertise or help with a problem. Include the date and your initials. Students, too, can indicate any concerns, problems or comments on their folders. In this way, you are aware of where your students are and what is happening. Students have a responsibility to let you know when they need help. Time and class size does not always allow for on the spot communications or for you to see as many students as you would like.

Other items that also belong in this folder are: photos(cuts),logs,tapes, rough drafts of the stories, etc.

USE RESOURCES

Students work individually, in pairs or in small groups as they research and write their stories. Journalism books, style books, newspapers, telephone books grammar books and dictionaries should be made available in the classroom; the library should be made available to any student who needs other reference material.

CONDUCT SPECIFIC LESSONS

At specific times, in addition to individual conferences, it will be necessary to conduct small group lessons (for a particular skill, or for those who are working on a similar story-such as stories on local civic organizations or local community sports teams); and whose class lessons (such as how to paraphrase; when to use direct quotations in a story; review of punctuation marks when quotations are used; and how to write headlines). The time and purpose of small group lessons and whole class lessons are determined by the needs of the students. These can be quickly realized when you check their folders and during conferences. A review lesson on objective and subjective reporting is usually in order at about this time. Without identifying the students, you can select examples from the students' folders, either writing it on the board, running it off a ditto, or using the overhead or opaque projector.

FORM GROUPS

The formation of groups can be done in several ways, depending upon factors within your particular class, such as size, strengths and weaknesses, how students interact as a group, etc.

a) You can assign permanent groups or rotating groups
b) You can give students the opportunity to select their own group.
c) You can assign groups according to similarities or differences in assignments, skills, etc.

WRITE SUMMARY REPORTS

At intervals, have students write a paragraph summarizing what they have already completed and what they are currently up to. These periodic summary reports, conferences and folder checks all serve to note the progress of the students; it tends to discourage the less mature or less structured students who might wait for the last minute to do the project.

DO LAYOUTS

The more able students will be able to assume some of the responsibilities of lay-out for the class newspaper. Perhaps typists can be recruited from a typing class if you are fortunate to have a typing teacher from the Business Dept. who will cooperate with you.

DISCUSS PROBLEMS

As students get more involved in their projects, a few minutes should be given at the beginning of the period daily or on designated days of the week to discuss problems. Offer suggestions and in general have students share with each other. This helps to encourage and help those who are not up to that point yet as well as prevent others from making the same mistakes. It gives each student a chance to "shine", especially those who are verbal but not as skilled in writing.

GETTING THE STORY

Students now have to focus in on the area they have selected and decide the best way to proceed. For some this will mean attending the meeting that was announced (civic association, planning board, etc.) and then sitting down and deciding: what they plan to pursue; what background information they need to know; where they can find this information; which organizations and people they have to see; to whom they have to write ; and what books, telephone numbers and addresses they have to check.

For others it may mean trying to find out about a landmark that is an attraction to residents and tourists. The local library might have books and pamphlets about such places in the community often written by local residents. Once they begin to research, each tidbit of information often leads to more sources. All this is to be recorded in their logs.

Regardless of the topic, it is important that the student-reporters learn as much as they can about a topic before they begin. For students who pursue stories about government (city, state, federal) they should read about what branch of government (legislative, executive, judicial) their story falls within, so that they know what they are talking about when they seek information and interview people. If enough students are doing stories on some level of government, it might be helpful to have a social studies teacher or very capable student (honors student for extra credit perhaps) invited to the class to provide important background and explain the difference in levels and branches of government.

CHECKLIST FOR STUDENT-REPORTERS

YOU SHOULD:

- ☐ Submit in writing the topic or area you intend to pursue.
- ☐ Keep all your work in a folder.
  - ☐ Check folder for teacher's comments and suggestions.
  - ☐ Keep teacher informed in writing when you have problems and questions.
- ☐ Keep a current and accurate log which includes any leads, conversations, observations, correspondence-sent or received, dates, telephone numbers, addresses, contacts, etc.
- ☐ List preparation research needed before you go out on interviews.
- ☐ Submit a written list of between 10-15 interview questions for approval before the interview takes place.
- ☐ Include any photos (cuts) of people or places with your copy.
- ☐ Tape interview if interviewee grants permission.
- ☐ Write a straight news story.
- ☐ Give a brief oral report of your project. *[Here students serve as models and encourage and motivate others who are not yet into their project. It also gives the less skillful writers the opportunity to verbalize on their topics.]*
- ☐ Function as a productive and cooperative member of your group at all times.
- ☐ Complete your journalism project on time.

PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS

ALLOW ENOUGH TIME

Students are often unrealistic in the time they allow for their projects. Therefore, it is essential that you know where they are during these various stages. Keep after those who are trying to get lost in the woodwork. Have students keep you informed by collecting their folders frequently and commenting on the content.

It will be necessary for students to attend various meetings or activities in the community, visit private or governmental agencies within the community, and arrange for interviews and conferences. They must allow enough time in which to contact the proper person/ department either by mail or telephone. Therefore, it's important that these young journalists realize this and allow enough time for contacts to be made and appointments to be arrange. Frequently, a student comes to class angry and disappointed because the official he dropped in to see, unannounced, was not in.

KEEP ON THE TOPIC

Students may be disappointed because the information they are gathering is not on the topic as they envisioned it. Then it's time to sit down with them and help them revise their topic, making allowances for this turn of events.

BE REALISTIC

There are also those students who undertake a monumental task that you know will be impossible to research or complete. Yet, they do not want advice because they believe they can do it.
You will have to be there to pick up the pieces and offer direction and guidance. For example, one of my students finally realized that she would not get to do an in-depth story of the Mets at Shea Stadium.

PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS (continued)

After several trips down there, she was thrown out of the stadium. When the mix-up was finally straightened out, she met with several Mets' public relations people who apologized and presented her with two free tickets to the game. But because she didn't get to speak to a ballplayer, she thought she had no story. (By the way, her "press pass" was honored by Shea officials. The passes of the other student-reporters covering stories were also recognized by numerous community groups and businesses). I had a conference with her and we both agreed she had much to write about.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED

Students may feel the topics they are covering are not as exciting as some of the other stories their classmates are writing about. Such students need encouragement either from you or some of the other students in the class. One young lady in my class had to be convinced that her trip to Lincoln Center to attend an evening of tribute to John Huston by his peers in the theatre and movies was exciting. Her $100 a ticket to this event and the invitation to the reception afterward were presented to her by a close friend who arranged the evening for Huston. Only she wasn't sure this was exciting enough! You must be prepared to encourage your students to continue if they don't feel it's important.

EXTRA CREDIT

STUDENTS CAN:

- Help student-reporters prepare for their interview by reviewing questions.
- Role-play with other students to help them prepare for interview.
- Act as copyreader for reporters who have completed their written story.
- Assist other students who are having difficulty locating information or writing their story.
- Take photographs for reporters who don't have a camera available.
- Type stories for students who cannot type or write legibly.
- Write headlines for other students' stories.
- Help in layout of journalism class newspaper.
- Design nameplate for paper.
- Give a complete oral report to the class explaining what they have done in their project, using tapes, photos and other materials for their presentation.
- Interview a guest in front of the class as the rest of the class, acting as reporters at a "press conference", take notes.

FIELD TRIPS

Tours to newspaper plants are enriching an exciting activity for students who are studying about journalism. Fortunately, there are two newspaper plants which offer free tours to students. However, these tours should be arranged for early in the term as they fill up quickly.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

ADDRESS:	229 W. 43rd Street New York, New York
SCHOOL SERVICE NUMBER:	(212) 556-1311
CONTACT PERSON:	Carol Zack
TOUR NUMBER:	(212) 556-1310
HOURS:	10 A.M. to 2 P.M.
DURATION:	One hour
PROGRAM:	Student will see physical set up of a news room, sports department, printing room, composing room and the computers which reporters use to type their stories.
CAUTION:	Students should not expect to see floors bustling with activities as reporters sit at their stories. Most of the staff are out on assignments and do not return until much later in the day.
SERVICES:	Newspapers can be delivered to school at discount. Times representative will come to your class and give an introductory lesson. Teacher manuals are very helpful. Student-activity booklets are available.

FIELD TRIPS (continued)

NEWSDAY

ADDRESS: 235 Pinelawn Road
Melville, Long Island 11747

TOUR NUMBER: (516) 454-2179

DURATION: One hour and 15 minutes

GROUP LIMITATION: 35 Students from grade 5 on up

PROGRAM: The areas that the tour covers are: news room, composing room, platemaking room, press room and circulation mail room. A slide presentation is also included.

SERVICES: Guides try to tailor the tour and information to the group. Therefore, students should have specific requests prior to trip.
Speakers are available to high school classes. They include members of the editorial staff.
Telephone number: (516) 454-2184

Newspapers available at discount rates - 15¢ per copy, minimum of 10 orders for at least 10 times. The newspapers can be adapted to specific needs of teachers. For example, if you would like to have the paper delivered when Newsday is covering a particular area such as a series on the family, they will do so for that period of time only! Also, if you prefer to have delivered on a particular day each week, and not on a daily basis, they can do this for you.

Newsday provides:

- Manuals and guides for teacher
- Activity booklets for students
- Speakers to introduce paper

TRIP ACTIVITIES

There are many activities which can be used in conjunction with a class journalism trip. Below are some suggestions:

BEFORE THE TRIP

EXPOSITORY WRITING - Before the trip, have students write specific travel directions to the New York Times Building from their school, using public transportation. It should include; numbers of streets, where to turn right, left, etc., and what trains to take. Have these directions read aloud. From students' responses, it will become evident which writing is most accurate. Put the directions on the board so students can proof read for correct punctuation and spelling. Have volunteer type these directions on a ditto sheet so it can be run off and a copy given to each student before the trip.

COMPARISON - WRITING - Before the trip, have students write what they know about newspaper plants and what they expect to see. Most of their experiences will be from what they have seen from T.V. news shows such as The Mary Tyler Moore Show and Lou Grant. When they return from their trip, students can fill in what they saw and learned. Then let small groups share their lists and see who were more accurate.

PHOTOGRAPHY - Some students should bring along cameras to take pictures as the class goes through the news building. These pictures can be part of a booklet and displayed in school.

TRIP ACTIVITIES (continued)

DURING THE TRIP

Students function as reporters on the trip. They must take notes of the important highlights of the trip. Then they write straight news, either the next day in class, or as a homework assignment. These stories are then shared in small groups and read for accuracy, objectivity and the correct structure for a news story. Comments can include strong points of news story and areas which need revision. Stories are then returned, rewritten, edited and then handed in to the teacher. The better stories can be displayed on bulletin board along with pictures of class trip.

AFTER THE TRIP

Have students write their reactions-positive and negative, about the class trip. These can be discussed and some can be listed on the board. Then have students write a letter to the tour department, expressing honestly and tactfully, their opinions. They must be specific and include what they found interesting, informative, entertaining, etc. They should also include specific areas that are lacking in the tour and suggestions for improvement. The tone of the letter must be courteous and informative. These letters should be read in class and a representative group of letters sent to the newspaper educational service office.

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